THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

SPEECH BY

DR. O. A. BROWNSON.

How the War should be Prosecuted.

THE DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT,

AND

THE DUTY OF THE CITIZEN.

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THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

Dr. Brownson was serenaded at Willard's Hotel, Washington, on Tuesday evening, August 28, 1862. In response to numerous calls, he appeared upon the balcony, and spoke as follows:

Fellow-Citizens: I am not accustomed to honors of this kind, and therefore do not well know how to respond to them. [Several voices—"Louder."]

My friends, I trust you will bear with me a little while, for I know very well if I speak as loud as I can at the outset, I shall not be able, in a very short while, to make myself heard. [Voice—"Do as you have a mind."]

Gentlemen. I do not consider this honor as intended for me personally, but take it as an evidence of your love of country, and willingness to recognize and to compliment any man who, in these times, shows that he is attached to his country and is willing to do something for it.

Gentlemen, these are times when every man who has any sort of manhood in him, should be in earnest in saving the integrity and life of this great American nation. [Loud applause.] It is not the right of any man in these times to feel indifferent, or to say that the great crisis in which we now are is one that does not affect him, and in which he need take no concern. The questions now before the country are such as come home to the very bosom and business of every man, woman, and child, in this whole American community. The life of a nation is at stake. The existence of the country is at stake.

I need not tell you that when country is gone all is gone. ["That's so," and applause.] Then without a country are we without a home, and a homeless man is one of the most desolate beings that you can imagine. Not only is the life—the very existence of our country at stake, but that which has made our country recognized as great and glorious, that for which we have most valued it, namely: as the exponent of Freedom, as the home of the free, as a country destined in the designs of Providence to prove what man is, and may be whenever he is free to himself. The times are not, however, the most auspicious we could wish.

There is much that is solemn, much that is dark, and that is desponding in our condition. I do not pretend to disguise from myself, and I would not disguise from you if I could, the dangers to which we are exposed. It is not holiday war in which we are engaged. It is against no weak and contemptible foe that we are waging battle; but it is with a determined foe, whose strength is, however, near, if not quite equal to, our own, and who will put forth all the strength he has, while we, as yet, have not begun to put forth a tithe of our own, [applause], and here is the danger. ["That's so."]

We have supposed that, by our superiority of number and wealth, we could march over the forces and trample in the dust all that were opposed to us, sweeping them away as the whirlwind sweeps away the chaff. It is not so. If we look at the question as we ought to look at it, we shall find that our strength, instead of being so much superior, as affairs now stand, is hardly equal. Look at these Southern States which have seceded, or virtually seceded—are in hostility to the Union. What is their strength?

You know as well as I do that we need the whole population

of a country; that not all the able-bodied men of the country can be expected to take up arms and fight, because your armies must be subsisted, your families must be supported, the industry of the country must go on, or else the armies themselves cannot be sustained. If you glance at our enemy in these times you will find that he has a laboring people. He has four millions of population—laborers, and those, with the present character of Southern industry, are sufficient to sustain the whole population of those States, and leave the whites free to fight us.

Now, if the South can sustain their armies by these 4,000,000 laborers, it would require something like 12,000,000 at the North to perform the same duty, with the complications of Northern industry, that 4,000,000 can perform at the South. How, then, are we to meet this crisis? Leaving them six millions, after drawing their seven millions, and us only six. How are we to meet this? We can do it only by taking away from them the support they derive from these four millions of laborers. [Loud applause.]

I am not here as an Abolitionist, [applause,] or an Anti-Abolitionist. [Renewed applause.] I stand here, gentlemen, an American citizen. [Cries of "Good," and applause.] I stand here in love with the Union that we have hitherto called the United States. ["We do yet."] I love it as a nation, as a country; I love it as my country, ["Good," "good," and applause,] and as yours; and I am here, and wherever I am, for the country—the nation first, the nation second, and the nation last, [applause,] and to die when the nation itself dies. ["Good," and applause.]

I have asked not for Abolition's sake, yet I tell you there are from 150,000 to 200,000 men within the radius of fifty

miles of you all armed to the teeth ready to cut our throats, and why are they there? because they have the slave laborers at home to raise their bread, corn, and wheat, and to take care of their plantations. Now, what I want to do, is to take away from them those same slaves, so that they shall have to go home and raise their own bread, attend to their own plantations, and protect their own families. [Applause.] I do not want them here to cut your throats or mine, and the way not to have them here is to provide for them work at home. [Laughter.]

So far, I am in favor of Abolitionism. I am in favor of detaching those slaves in all the rebellious States from their masters, and depriving them of their service. I care not whether they render us any positive service or not; but I say if we can take away their services from their masters, their owners, or from the Southern cause, we have added equal to 8,000,000 to our own population. [Applause.] I know there is great hesitancy about it. Many people talk of constitutions, of the horrors of San Domingo, and all those things. I understand perfectly well what the Constitution says. When the agitation of the question of Slavery threatened to endanger the union of these States, I opposed it. [Applause.]

I said, "Down with agitation." [Cheers.] When now the Union is threatened from another cause, and Slavery is the main thing which can sustain the party opposed to the existence of this Government; when it is, in my judgment, impossible to preserve both the Union and Slavery, I say down with Slavery. [Vociferous applause.] Let every slave go free, but let the country be saved. [Renewed applause.] And unless we are prepared to say that to it

very soon, and to say it, not as I am saying it, a private individual from this platform, but until we are prepared to say it from the Capitol and from the White House, in tones that will ring throughout the whole civilized world, the dangers which threaten us will not be diminished. [Applause, and cries of "That's so."]

I do not stand here to find fault with the Government. There are many things, no doubt, remiss in its actions; many things which I would like to have had different; many things which, if I had been the Government, I would have done differently. [Applause.] But then I am not the Government. [Voice—"I wish you were," and laughter.] We must sustain the Government we have, [applause,] only praying God that the Government may always prove equal to the wants of the country. [Cries of "That's so," and applause.] I know there are many difficulties about it. Many men look only at the obstacles and the little objections which may be brought against this and that measure.

Why, there was never a measure proposed in this world against which you could not bring objections enough to overwhelm every little mind that contemplated it; but the men fitted for the time never dwell on those objections. They look at the great positive reasons for the measures, the positive gain that is to be derived from it, and they seize upon that, and present it before the people to electrify the whole country to carry it with them. [Applause.] That is the only way we can act in times like these.

In order to overcome these difficulties, these little technicalities or obstacles which may be in the way, or petty attorneys may imagine, or bring up, or cavil at—things of that sort—we must stand up like men and say the country

is first, and if there are any of these little difficulties in the way, let them go the way of all the earth—sweep them away with one strong, determined blow. [Applause.] I do not ask, as I said before, abolition for abolition sake. So far as the abolition of Slavery is concerned, I feel not the slightest uneasiness. The shot that was fired at Sumter knocked off the fetters of every slave in the land. [Applause.]

Let this war terminate as it will, either for the United States or for the Southern Confederacy; let the present Administration remain here in power, or let Jeff. Davis and his gang come here, slavery is alike doomed. And as an anti-slavery man I care nothing about it, and I touch the question only in its bearing to the great military operations of the country—in its bearing on its strength of the two parties; and I want them emancipated for the purpose of weakening the enemy, and thus increasing relatively the strength of the North. [Loud applause.]

Furthermore, I want this same thing done, because there is that cloud hanging over us of intervention. Some say there is no longer any danger of it. I tell you there is until you inscribe along with this word Union another word of still greater import, and without which Union is nothing, Liberty. ["Good, good," and applause.] Just put on your banners "Union and Liberty," "Liberty to All," [applause,] whether white, black, yellow or copper-colored, inscribe them in large capitals and illuminate them, and I tell you that all humanity is with you. [Loud and prolonged applause.] The whole civilized world is with you. [Applause.] All that is strong, generous, noble, in the human heart is with you. [Renewed applause.] And what is more than all humanities, God, the Eternal Creator himself

is with you, and will give victory to your arms. [Loud and continued applause.]

It is therefore to weaken the enemy, and thus relatively strengthen the cause of the Union and prevent foreign intervention, that I ask for the declaration of the freedom of the slave. [A voice—"Yes, and we ought, and must have it."]

[Several voices—"Yes! Yes!" and applause.]

[Other voices—"No! No!"]

I hear some cry out against this. Why? Why, my friends, there are two questions before the public. One is the slavery question, and the other is the negro question. [Laughter.]

On the slavery question nine-tenths of the people of the whole United States are anti-slavery; but on the negro question about nine-tenths are anti-negro. [Laughter.] And the great difficulty in this question is that whenever you talk of freeing the slave there is a host of pettifoggers rising up all around, saying: What, do you mean to have negro equality? Do you mean to give the negro an equal footing with the white man? What, do you mean to place the negro race on an equality with the white race, and have them live side by side?

There are some, no doubt, who think of that. I never thought of doing it, [laughter,] for I never professed to be a great negro lover. [Applause.] I believe the negro to be a man, sprung from the same race as myself, having the same natural rights of man that I have; and I am willing that he should have the same social political rights that I have, but not in the community with myself. [Laughter and applause.] I do not ask that, nor do I suppose that this will follow as a matter of necessity from their emancipation.

If I could have my wish, the two races would be separate. [Applause.] I would let the negro have a country of his own. [Renewed applause.] I would treat him well. I would aid him to found institutions of his own—give him all the advantages of our superior civilization that he could take. I would do it for his benefit, just as much as I would for my own. I therefore say here, as I have said elsewhere, and as I always will say, that I like that policy of the President of colonization—of colonizing the free blacks in some territory out of the United States.

The only point in which I perhaps might differ is, that I do not make emancipation depend on colonization. [Applause.] Emancipation I demand as a war measure—as a measure necessary for prosecuting successfully this war, and guarding against the occurrence of another rebellion. Colonization is a matter which, though it be begun now, will always be best carried on in time of peace, after the war is over. [Applause.] And ultimately, if they are declared free, white labor will flock toward the South, either from the Northern States or from the Old World, and the colored labor will go further and further South, until it gets into the torrid zone, its own native country.

So far I am in favor of colonization. I am in favor of it because I do not believe in negro equality, because I have no wish, nor have I ever believed it is possible that the immense prejudices of my countrymen and with myself—for I share those prejudices—I do not believe it is possible ever to place the negro in a community where the two races are on a platform of equality with the white races. [“Bravo,” and applause.] You can never make one people of the two races. You can never have a homogeneous people where

you have two distinct races that do not, and cannot, without shocking the instincts of both races, intermarry.

It is only intermarriage that makes the population of one country one people, and as that cannot and ought not to take place between the white and the black, they can never make one people; and, therefore, should never live on the same territory, but should be separate, each having a community of his own. ["Good," and applause.] I say I like this measure, and so far as the President has urged it, I agree heartily in favor of it. I wish, however, he would push the question of Emancipation a little further. That he would let us see that we are to have some result for our fighting.

I send my sons to battle; you send your sons, your fathers, your brothers, and the wife her husband there cheerfully. They sicken, and they die. We do not grieve if we find their death, their sufferings, avail aught for the great cause to which our country is concentrated—that is, the universal freedom to universal man. [Loud applause.] But, if we find that all those sacrifices are in vain—that nothing is gained—while we grieve, doubly grieve, our own private losses, we grieve still more, Sir, the loss of our country. [Loud applause.]

There is one measure that I wish also to speak of. In these times when so much fault is found with the Government, it gives me great pleasure to find that it has adopted one measure that I can most heartily approve. I heartily approve its proposition for a draft. [Applause.] I know much has been said against it. I know some of the Governors of the States regard it as a stigma, and call upon volunteers to come forward that there may be no necessity for the draft. I do not like that.

The calling for a draft is the highest exercise of the national majesty. As yet the nation has not acted. It has not acted in calling together its defenders. States have acted individually, and individuals have acted, but the nation has not spoken in its majesty, and called upon its citizens to come to its aid. We have thus far conducted this war on States Rights, States Sovereignty, principles, against which we are fighting, and never, till the nation puts forth its majesty—calls by its own power its citizens to its aid, and puts arms into their hands to defend it—will the national majesty be manifest either to ourselves or to others. [Cries of "Good," and applause.]

Again, I speak not unkindly of those who volunteer. I honor those who do volunteer, [applause,] but we thus make the defence of the country a volunteer act. I want something more. I desire that you and I and every man should feel it a duty to defend the country and to respond to its authority in defence of it. When you have asserted by the draft the majesty of the nation on the one hand, and the duty of the citizen on the other, you have the foundations of a true nationality, and you will be no longer liable to any of those divisions which are now distracting us and threatening us with death.

Then, looking at this measure as one which, if carried out, I believe will be successful and will enable us to re-assert the dignity of the Government, the supremacy of the laws, and bring us back, not members of the Union, precisely as it was, but to a real and more effective union of these States. [Applause.] This is what I look for. We have struggles, we have trials; yet the victory is not won, the danger is not over.

The country is now, perhaps, in its very crisis, but instead of blaming the Government that it has not done more, would it not be well for us to look at ourselves, and ask if we have not deserved all the chastisement we have received, and if these trials which war brings were not trials necessary to save us from that effeminacy which was overcoming us, from that luxury which was ruining us, and rekindle that almost extinct manhood within us.

The country is never lost until manhood is lost. ["That's so," and applause.] The country is lost first in the individual ceasing to be a man—to be a man conscious of his rights, and equally conscious of his duties, and determined and energetic in asserting the one and in performing the other. [Applause.] For my own part, I have long seen that this war was necessary. I have long seen that it would come; and, though we may regard it as a judgment, I think it is a judgment sent in mercy upon us, and that there is more of mercy in the sending of it than of indignation on the part of our Creator.

Let us then not despond. Let us feel that we yet have a country, and it shall be restored and maintained, let whatever forces there may be combined against it. [Applause.]

We are here placed by Almighty God to develop and sustain free institutions, and set an example to the whole world. Let us not be false to that mission. Let us not be recreant to our duty; but let us be strong in the confidence of Him who was the God of our fathers, that after he has chastised us for a time he will still be our God, and as near and tender to us as to our fathers. [Applause.] Let us have this feeling. Let the Government rise to the dignity of the occasion; let it lay aside whatever timidity there may

have been in its counsels, and understand that in times like these it is only the bold, the energetic spirit that prevails.

Timid counsels now are treason. [Applause.] Timid actions are worse than treachery. [Renewed applause.] We want such a leader as will say to those below him in authority, "There is your work—go and do it," and leave not a Rebel to desecrate the land of Freedom. [Vociferous applause.] Rise up in your strength, in the strength of your country, and in the strength of your God, and sweep away treason from the land of Washington, Adams and Jefferson. [Applause.] Let that voice ring out as it rung out in 1776, and rebellion will soon hide its head, and seek cover from the storm. [Applause.]

I fear not treachery, nor what Rebels can do, if I have only the true heart in my own country. [Applause.] If on the side of loyalty there be truth, energy, manhood, and a determination to dare and to do everything for its salvation, then it will be done. I tell you there is a power in the human arm when it is raised in the cause of justice—a power that is more than human, for then its power is strengthened by all the power of manhood, by all the forces of nature, and by all the forces of nature's God. [Applause.]

Therefore, take timid counsels no longer. [Applause.] Conservatives are not the men who can save the country. [Renewed applause.] It is, as I before remarked, your bold energetic spirit. The man of the future, not the man of the past, with his eyes on the backside of his head, [laughter and applause,] always dwelling among the tombs, who is to save you. The bold man, the daring man, who sees the future, and, grasping it with both hands, says, "Come on, my boys—we'll have it!" [Applause.] That's the only

kind of a man who can save us in these times. Get such a man. Put him in the Presidential chair or put him on the battle-field—put him anywhere. He conquers, he triumphs, and you triumph with him.

But I have detained you longer than I intended. ["Go on, go on."] Well, I would go on a great deal longer, but you called on me to speak louder, and to oblige you I have spoken so loud as to greatly exhaust my strength, but I believe I have not told you out all the ideas I have. [Laughter.] These are not times when I wish to cast censure or bestow praise. They are times when we should all make manly resolves for our country's interest. I learn from this war one great truth, which all history and all philosophy teaches, that man never loves thoroughly, until he has suffered for it, and no man ever loves his country until he has suffered for, and with it. [Applause.]

The great obstacle we have to contend against is the simple fact that we have been too prosperous, and our country has called upon us for too few sacrifices. We should glory in the opportunity now offered to us for making sacrifices. ["That's so."]

As a young man, who had volunteered, was about taking his leave to join the army, I said to him, "Are you not afraid you will get killed?" "No," said he; "when I made up my mind to go into the army, I offered my life in sacrifice to God and my country. I have given it up, and it matters not to me whether I die to-day or to-morrow; on the battle-field, or in my tent, or in my bed; my life is my God's and my country's—no longer my own." [Applause.]

Now, until we have an opportunity to call forth such heroic sentiments we are not a nation. Had this great trial

not have come, we should have fallen to a condition below that of the Chinese, below that of any nation that ever called itself civilized, through our extraordinary material prosperity. It is, therefore, no calamity, but a necessity, and I trust will result in great benefit.

The speaker retired amid great applause and numerous calls for Gen. Corcoran, who was not, however, present.

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